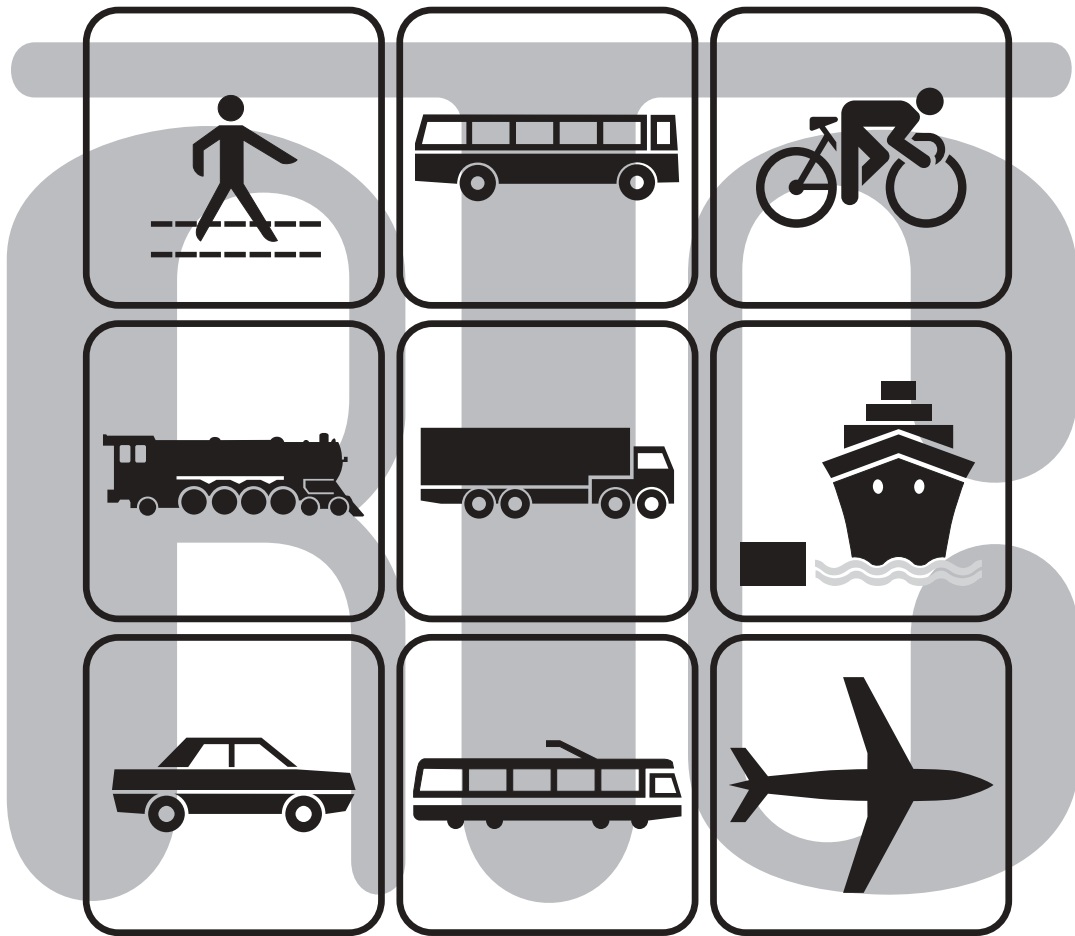


# **Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County**



**Updated: December 2002  
Amended: December 2003**

**Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council**

# METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## FOR CLARK COUNTY

Adopted: December 3, 2002  
RTC Board Resolution 12-02-24

Amended: December 2, 2003  
RTC Board Resolution 12-03-32

Preparation of this Plan was funded by grants from the Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation (Federal Highways Administration and Federal Transit Administration) and local funds from RTC member jurisdictions.

The policies, findings, and recommendations contained in this Plan do not necessarily represent the views of the state and federal agencies identified above and do not obligate those agencies to provide funding to implement the contents of the Plan as adopted.

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Oregon Department of Transportation	Metro (Portland, Oregon)
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City of Camas	City of Ridgefield
City of Stevenson	City of Vancouver
City of Washougal	City of White Salmon
City of La Center	Town of Yacolt
City of North Bonneville	City of Bingen
Port of Klickitat	Port of Ridgefield
Port of Vancouver	Port of Camas-Washougal
Port of Skamania County	

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Cities East	Mayor Jeff Guard (Washougal)
Cities North	Council Member Bill Ganley (Battle Ground)
City of Vancouver	Thayer Rorabaugh (Transportation Services Manager)
Clark County	Commissioner Judie Stanton
Clark County	Commissioner Craig Pridemore [Vice-President]
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Clark County Planning	Patrick Lee
City of Vancouver, Public Works	Matt Ransom
City of Vancouver, Community Development	Bryan Snodgrass
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Regional Transportation Council	Dean Lookingbill

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**Amendment: RTC Board Resolution 12-03-32 (Dec. 2, 2003), *2003 MTP Amendment***

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**MTP GLOSSARY**



## **STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director  
**DATE:** November 26, 2002  
**SUBJECT:** **Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2002-2023 Update, Resolution 12-02-24**

---

### **BACKGROUND**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County is the long-range regional transportation plan for the region. It has a twenty-year planning horizon and represents the collective strategy for developing a regional transportation system that provides mobility and accessibility for personal travel and goods movement. The Plan also facilitates existing and planned economic development. The MTP identifies future travel needs, recommends policies/strategies, and identifies implementation programs to meet future needs. Federal and state law requires that the Plan undergo periodic review. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County was initially adopted by the RTC Board of Directors in December 1994. The Plan has been subject to annual review and since 1994 has undergone two major updates and four amendments. A further MTP update is anticipated once the 2003 update to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan for Clark County is finalized.

The 2002 MTP represents a comprehensive update to all chapters in the Plan. Key elements in the 2002 MTP include:

- Base Year Update to 2000.
- Horizon Year Update to 2023.
- New Demographic Control Totals.
- Financial Plan Element Update.
- Transportation Project List Update.
- An updated air quality conformity analysis consistent with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.
- MTP Strategic Plan.

The MTP is developed with technical review and input provided by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and policy review provided by the RTC Board. During 2002, public involvement activities at which MTP development was presented and/or publicized include the Vancouver Neighborhood Fair in November 2002, three specific MTP outreach

meetings held in March and November, 2002 and a transportation planning booth at the Clark County Fair in August 2002. There were extensive public outreach efforts as part of the Portland-Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership in 2002. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan document is available on RTC's web site at <http://www.rtc.wa.gov/programs/mtp/outline.htm>.

## **POLICY IMPLICATION**

The MTP represents the framework plan and policies for development of the regional transportation system. Projects programmed for federal funding in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) must first be identified as needed in the MTP. RTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), must certify that there is consistency between the MTP and the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans required under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and that the transportation elements conform with the GMA's requirements. The evaluation of local transportation elements was carried out by RTC in 1994. Consistency and certification will be reviewed following the 2003 update to local comprehensive plans.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATION**

Regular update and amendment of the adopted MTP is a requirement for the receipt of federal transportation funds. Federal regulations require that the MTP contain a financial plan that demonstrates consistency between proposed transportation investments and available and projected sources of revenue. After revenues are set aside for system maintenance, preservation and operating costs, the remaining revenues are available to fund capital improvements to the regional transportation system identified in the MTP.

## **ACTION REQUESTED**

Adoption of Resolution 12-02-24, "Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2002-2023 Update".

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2002,

by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON  
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Arch Miller  
President of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Lookingbill  
Transportation Director

**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director  
**DATE:** November 25, 2003  
**SUBJECT:** 2003 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment, Resolution 12-03-32

---

**BACKGROUND**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County is the long-range regional transportation plan for the region. It has a twenty-year planning horizon and represents the collective strategy for developing a regional transportation system that provides mobility and accessibility for personal travel and goods movement. The Plan also facilitates existing and planned economic development. The MTP identifies future travel needs, recommends policies/strategies, and identifies implementation programs to meet future needs. Federal and state law requires that the Plan undergo periodic review. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County was initially adopted by the RTC Board of Directors in December 1994. The Plan has been subject to annual review and has undergone three major updates and four amendments in the ensuing nine years.

The proposed 2003 amendment will make minor changes to the MTP which will 1) add the Port of Ridgefield Rail Overpass project, 2) update the MTP's Strategic Plan section and 3) make minor changes to the Financial Plan chapter to address funding of the State "nickel package" projects and to delete those projects now complete.

The proposed changes are further described below:

**1) PORT OF RIDGEFIELD RAIL OVERPASS PROJECT**

It is proposed that the Port of Ridgefield Rail Overpass project be amended into the MTP. The Port of Ridgefield has presented the project to the RTC Board at the June and August 2003 Board meetings.

The proposed Ridgefield Railroad Overpass will provide a grade separated highway overpass to the Port of Ridgefield and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. Benefits of the project include: 1) allowing closure of three at-grade railroad crossings, including the Mill Street crossing, which is ranked the fifth most dangerous crossing in Washington state, 2) enabling

improvement of the high speed rail corridor between Eugene, Oregon and Vancouver, B.C., 3) providing safer access to the Port of Ridgefield's Lake River Industrial Site (LRIS), a 41-acre industrial site located within the City of Ridgefield, and 4) providing visitor and tourist access to the 5,500-acre Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. The estimated cost for the project is \$20 million. The project is in the Port's Comprehensive Plan, is identified in the 2002 Ridgefield Community Action Plan and the City of Ridgefield's updated Capital Facilities Plan.

The current MTP (December 2002) supports development of the Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor and the Port of Ridgefield overpass project is an integral safety improvement to the rail corridor. While this project is not on the designated regional transportation system, the project is regionally significant as it crosses the mainline railroad and provides access to the Port of Ridgefield. The project is air quality exempt and will therefore not require update to the MTP's air quality conformity analysis. Identification of this project in the MTP will allow the Port of Ridgefield to pursue federal funding opportunities.

## **2) STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The December 2002 MTP included, for the first time, a Strategic Plan section as part of the MTP Appendix. The Strategic Plan allows for the inclusion of "illustrative projects" and/or planning concepts not yet fully developed and not ready for inclusion in the fiscally-constrained MTP. It is proposed that with the 2003 MTP amendment, the Strategic Plan be re-worded to better reflect the status of these projects/plans. In summary, proposed changes are to focus the description of the Strategic Plan elements on need and purpose for transportation improvements and to provide description of the Federal Transit Administration's New Start Alternatives Analysis (AA) process for high capacity transit in the I-5/I-205/SR-500 loop.

*Excerpt from MTP Strategic Plan section (updated):*

The region's adopted long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan must include a financial plan that shows how projects are to be implemented. The financial plan includes revenue from public and private sources and additional funding strategies in order for the region to be eligible for federal transportation revenues. The current federal transportation bill, TEA-21, allows for "illustrative projects" to be identified in the regional transportation planning process outside of the requirements for financial feasibility and transportation air quality conformity. The concept behind this section of the Strategic MTP is to set into place a regionally coordinated and analytically sound transportation planning process upon which to initiate an analysis of project feasibility.

### **A) Interstate 5 Columbia River Bridge**

- **Need and Purpose** – Due to highway capacity limitations and the three-lane bottleneck at the I-5 Interstate Bridge, traffic congestion is causing businesses and individuals to experience long delays. Without improvements, congestion will increase to unacceptable levels having a significant impact on the economy and potentially limiting the attraction and retention of business and industry. A set of multi-modal improvements, including highway, transit, freight rail and demand management, are needed in the corridor.

- **Description** – For the Interstate 5 Bridge, the I-5 Transportation Partnership planning process recommends that the Bridge be replaced or supplemented. The I-5 Partnership recommends the Bridge should carry 3 through travel lanes and up to 2 supplemental or auxiliary lanes for a total of five lanes in each direction and for transit there should be 2 light rail tracks. Additional freeway improvements would be needed between Columbia Boulevard in Oregon and SR-500 in Vancouver to balance the volume of on and off traffic consistent with the 3 through lanes in the corridor.
- **Land Use/Economic Development Impacts** – The bi-state transportation and land use systems are integrally related, each impacts and influences the other. Bi-state coordination among jurisdictions and agencies in pursuing economic development is a key part of maintaining a strong economy. Additional capacity across the Columbia River will improve the flow of freight and goods throughout the corridor. Specifically, it will improve access to/from industrial destinations such as the Port of Vancouver, Rivergate and the Columbia Corridor. Access would also be improved to and from major employment centers such as downtown Vancouver, downtown Portland, Lloyd Center, Swan Island and the Columbia Corridor.
- **Financial Impacts** – Financing the highway and transit improvements will be expensive. Capital projects of such magnitude are likely to require a variety of funding and financing mechanisms. There are promising federal, state and local revenue sources that when combined, could provide the ability to bond the capital cost of the projects. Developing the financial package will be complicated and will involve working together across a range of diverse entities.
- **Next Steps** – The process for moving the analysis forward involves incorporating the package of I-5 Partnership study recommendations into Metro's and RTC's long-range regional transportation plans and specifically initiating an EIS process for the I-5 Columbia River crossing.

## **B) I-5/I-205/SR-500 Federal Transit New Start Alternatives Analysis**

- **Need and Purpose** – High levels of traffic congestion and a constrained ability to expand highway capacity in parts of the I-5, I-205 and SR-500 corridors along with Clark County's growth management policies calls for the analysis of high capacity transit alternatives. The high demand for travel between the Vancouver and Portland metropolitan area and across the limited capacity of the existing I-5 and I-205 bridges has also created a transportation system bottleneck between the two regions that dramatically increases delay for commuters, business and industry. The I-5 and I-205 corridors are built out and provide only marginal room for freeway expansion. Additional high capacity transit can significantly add person-moving capacity for commuters and allow for improved business and economic development capacity. The proposal would be to address the transportation problems in a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Start Alternatives Analysis (AA) process. The purpose of the AA would be to address

how to significantly increase the level and capacity of transit service within Clark County and the connection to transit-served destinations in the Portland region.

- **Description** – The FTA New Start Alternatives Analysis (AA) process would include analysis of high capacity transit in the I-5/I-205/SR-500 loop up I-5 across the Columbia River through downtown Vancouver to the SR-500 or Fourth Plain corridor to Van Mall up to the future 83<sup>rd</sup> Street transit center and down I-205 across the Columbia River to connect with the Portland transit system. The analysis would address the travel mobility in each of these corridors, the economic impacts, focus on improving the internal Clark County transit mode share and connection with the Portland high capacity transit system.
- **Land Use and Economic Impacts** – Additional person-moving capacity in both of the interstate corridors will help to improve the business and freight moving capacity of the corridors. The expansion in the level of transit service will help to achieve the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan’s vision for compact urban growth and the preservation of forestland and open space. The access provided by a high capacity transit alternative can provide further economic development opportunities in downtown Vancouver and redevelopment opportunities along Fourth Plain.
- **Financial Impacts** – Financing any or all parts of the proposed high capacity transit alternatives will be expensive and will likely depend on additional local revenues approved through a public vote. In addition to the increase in local revenue, considerable federal support will be needed. The financial plan for the proposed project will need to be completed by the time the project completes the environmental and design phase.
- **Next Steps** – The process for moving the FTA New Start Alternatives Analysis forward includes a number of related but separate steps. The land use element associated with the concept needs to be considered by the City of Vancouver via their Growth Management Comprehensive Plan. In order to move the project forward for federal project funding eligibility, the Federal Transit Administration requires the official initiation of a “New Start” process. The New Start process begins with Alternatives Analysis and moves through an environmental/preliminary engineering process and ends with a final design and federal “full funding” agreement. This process includes many individual steps and approvals along the way. The Alternatives Analysis process would evaluate several modal and alignment options for addressing mobility needs in a corridor or in this case in three corridors that form the loop. The AA process provides information to citizens and local officials on the benefits, costs, and impacts of alternative types of transportation. Potential local funding sources for construction and operation are also identified. An extensive public involvement process that includes a wide range of stakeholders is anticipated. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) may be completed on a range of alternatives as part of the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process or it may be completed on a single Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) following the

completion of the AA process. The AA process concludes with the selection of a locally preferred alternative (LPA), which is adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) into the financially-constrained Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Completion of a DEIS and a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is required in order to receive federal funding approval.

There are two additional sections in the current MTP Strategic Plan; the I-5 North Discovery Corridor and the Port of Vancouver Industrial Lands Access from the North. These sections will be re-addressed in the 2004 MTP update.

### **3) MINOR AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 4, FINANCIAL PLAN, TABLES**

Transportation projects must be identified in the MTP before they can be programmed for federal funding in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). Transportation projects identified in the MTP are listed in the MTP Appendix A and those on the designated regional transportation system are also listed, with cost estimates provided, in the MTP's Financial Plan. These project lists will be updated in the December 2003 MTP amendment to reflect the \$61.5 million of projects that have been completed, or will be completed, between December 2002 and December 2003. The lists will also be updated to reflect the projects funded under the state "nickel package" program that will result in projects moving from Table 4-6, "MTP: list of Fiscally-Constrained Projects", to Table 4-5, "MTP Projects Under Construction and/or Fully Funded". The lists will be further updated in the 2004 MTP once Clark County and local jurisdictions' Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) project lists are complete as part of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update process. MTP, Chapter 4, project list proposed changes are provided below:

#### Projects Complete (delete from MTP, Chapter 4, Tables 4-5 and 4-6)

- SR-502, Battle Ground west city limits to SR-503, widen to two lanes each direction with center left turn lane (\$7.6 M)
- NE 76<sup>th</sup> Street, NE 107<sup>th</sup> to NE 117<sup>th</sup> Avenue, widen to add center left turn lane, bike lanes and sidewalks (\$2.2 M)
- Padden Parkway (west leg), NE 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to NE 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, construct two lanes each direction on new alignment (\$13.5 M)
- Padden Parkway, I-205 to NE 94<sup>th</sup> Avenue, widen two lanes each direction with bike/pedestrian trail (\$6.2 M)
- Ward Road, Fourth Plain to NE 88<sup>th</sup> Street, widen two lanes each direction with center left turn lane, sidewalks, bike lanes (\$5.1 M)
- NE 117<sup>th</sup>/119<sup>th</sup> Street, Highway 99 to 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, realignment (\$6.3 M)
- NE 134<sup>th</sup> Street, Rockwell Drive to WSU entrance, widen two lanes each direction (\$3.8 M)
- NE 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Mill Plain to Fourth Plain, one lane each direction extension on new alignment (\$6.6 M)
- SE 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, SE 34<sup>th</sup> to SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street, construct two lanes each direction (\$4.5 M)
- SE 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, SE 15<sup>th</sup> to SE 1<sup>st</sup> Street, widen to two lanes each direction (\$5.7 M)

Over \$61 million in projects will be deleted from the MTP list that will allow room for project cost estimates to be updated and possibly new projects to be added in the 2004 MTP update process.

Projects Under Construction and/or Fully Funded (moved from MTP, Chapter 4, Table 4-6 to Table 4-5)

- I-5, Salmon Creek to I-205, widen to three lanes each direction (\$38.6 M)
- I-5, NE 134<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange, diamond interchange at I-5, ramp reconfiguration at 134<sup>th</sup> Street/I-205, (Park and Ride relocation and expansion) (\$40 M)
- I-5, NE 219<sup>th</sup> Street (SR-502), new interchange (\$34.7 M)
- I-205, at Mill Plain Interchange, ramp extension to NE 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue (\$13.5 M)
- SR-500, at NE 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue, construct new interchange (\$26.7 M)

Over \$153 million in projects are moved into the “projects under construction” or “fully funded” list (Table 4-5 of Chapter 4) resulting in a list of “fully funded” projects totaling over \$235 million. In addition, the SR-502 project from Duluth to Battle Ground west city limits, listed in Table 4-6, now has \$15 million in “nickel package” funding for Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way phases.

Table 4-7 will be added to list those projects that are not part of the designated regional transportation system but that have regional significance as they cross the mainline railroad. These two projects are the 39<sup>th</sup> Street railroad over-crossing and Vancouver Yard rail improvement (\$53.773 million) funded as part of the state “nickel package” and the Port of Ridgefield over-crossing described in section 1) above with an estimated cost of \$20 million.

## **POLICY IMPLICATION**

The MTP represents the framework plan and policies for development of the regional transportation system. The 2004-2006 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), adopted in October 2003, is consistent with the Plan. The MTP is developed with technical review and input provided by Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) members and policy review provided by the RTC Board.

RTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), must certify that there is consistency between the MTP and the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans required under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and that the transportation elements conform with the GMA’s requirements. The evaluation of local transportation elements was carried out by RTC in 1994 and re-evaluated in 1997. A major update to the MTP will be carried out in conjunction with the update to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan for Clark County update in 2004. Consistency and certification will be reviewed as part of the 2004 update process.



**BUDGET IMPLICATION**

Regular update and amendment of the adopted MTP is a requirement for the receipt of federal transportation funds. Federal regulations require that the MTP contain a financial plan that demonstrates consistency between proposed transportation investments and available and projected sources of revenue. After revenues are set aside for system maintenance, preservation and operating costs, the remaining revenues are available to fund capital improvements to the regional transportation system identified in the MTP.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Adoption of Resolution 12-03-32, "2003 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment".

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2003,

by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON  
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig A. Pridemore  
President of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Lookingbill  
Transportation Director